

Report of D. Thompson

Sept. 14, 1926.

In company with James Russell, I interviewed George Shultz at his farm in Franklin Township, N. J. In addition to farming Shultz does some horse shoeing business. He informed me that he knew Mrs. Jane Gibson; that the last time he saw her was about the middle of June, 1922 when she was at his place to have him put shoes on her mule, Jennie. He claims that he was not approached by Mrs. Gibson at any time with the proposition that he corroborate her story. He had heard that she had tried to get certain persons to do so and when I asked the source of his information, he said that he had read in the newspapers that she had endeavored to get Sipe to testify. I am satisfied that Shultz has no first hand information.

I proceeded to the Russell house and spent about two hours with James Russell and Nellie Lo Russell, his wife. Mrs. Russell reiterated the story which she had previously told and which is embodied in her affidavit of November 10th, 1922, a copy of which you handed me some time ago.

In addition, Mrs. Russell states that two years ago last July (1924), Mr. Coffman, who resides in the big house on the Johnson & Johnson farm was driving along the road in front of her place and stopped to ask her how she was making out with her trouble with Jane Gibson. She replied that everything was turning out all right. At this point, Robert Erling, who was on the wagon with Coffman asked Mrs. Russell what lawyer was representing her. She replied that she had none. After some general conversation, they drove away.

Later the same day, she again met Erling at the slaughter house down on the main road. At that time Erling requested her to let you know that he was on DeBussey's Lane on the night of the murder. He told her at that time that on the night of September 14th, 1922, he and a lady friend had been out of New Brunswick to a ball game or some similar event and returning reached the vicinity of DeBussey's Lane and Easton Avenue just about dusk. He drove into the lane a short distance and parked his car. The young lady got out and walked around for a few moments and at about this time Jane Gibson drove out from the bushes on her mule and came onto the lane a short distance from his car. He knew her and not wanting her to recognize him, he switched off his head lights. She proceeded on up the lane and he backed out to Easton Avenue and came on into New Brunswick. That there were other cars in the lane at the time he was there. He further informed her that on one occasion he started with a friend of his to call at Mrs. Hall's home to inform her as to the time of the evening he had seen Mrs. Gibson on DeBussey's Lane. Both of them had been drinking and on the way got into some trouble with the result that they were taken to the Police station and held there over night.

Mrs. Russell claims that she asked Erling if he had seen Mr. Mills around the lane that night. He hesitated for a moment and replied that he would tell you his story when he saw you.

Mrs. Russell says that she did not notify you at once but went to Ocean Grove, N. J. On her return she was informed by Mrs. Strubey, a colored lady who lives in a small house on the



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main highway near the entrance of the Lane on which the Russell's reside, that Erling had been looking for her during her absence. Mrs. Strabey was with Mrs. Russell at the time he told her his story, and Mrs. Russell thinks that she probably will remember the occurrence.

Mrs. Russell again saw Erling and he asked if she had told you. She told him that she had not, but would do so and on September 8th, 1924, or about that date, she called at your office and told you.

Mrs. Strabey is not living with her husband at the present time but is working as a domestic for some family in the Highland Park section. I am endeavoring to get a line on where she can be found.

Mrs. Russell claims that two or three days after the finding of the bodies, she had a conversation with Mrs. Gibson and remarked about the awful murder. Mrs. Gibson's reply was simply: "Nobody but the family, Mills says, nobody but the family, as they did not want the money to get out of the family."

She again talked with Mrs. Gibson after the newspapers had mentioned the fact that a reward had been offered and at that time Mrs. Gibson remarked in a sarcastic way about the fact that Mrs. Hall had offered no reward.

Mrs. Gibson did not intimate in any of these conversations that she knew anything as to who had committed the murder.

Mrs. Russell claims that the prosecution is endeavoring to show that she was not at home on the night of the murder and therefore could not have been in conversation with Mrs. Gibson at the time she claims. The witnesses they hope to prove this fact by are Louis Blackwell and Mary Blackwell his wife, who reside across the road from Mrs. Russell and Howard Greenwood and Carrie Greenwood, (possibly Greenwald) who reside in the same neighborhood. All of the parties are colored.

As to Blackwell, the claim is that he was ill at the time and his wife and niece were nursing him and they all know Mrs. Russell was not at home. Mrs. Russell claims that Mrs. Blackwell and her niece were visiting friends in Washington, D.C. at the time of the murder and did not return home until some time after the bodies had been found. Further that for several days prior to the night in question and for several days subsequent thereto, she had not seen Blackwell around his place. That the Blackwells have been on very intimate terms with Mrs. Gibson since they came to live in the neighborhood and were the first people to criticize Mrs. Russell for contradicting Mrs. Gibson.

Blackwell's correct name is said to be William Blackwood. He originally lived in Washington, D.C. In 1908 he left Washington going to Newark, N. J. where he married a light skinned woman, said to be an Indian. They had one child. Blackwell remained in Newark until the time of his wife's death in 1920, when he returned to Washington. In the same year after his return to Washington, he was convicted in the Municipal Court on a charge of maintaining a disorderly house and sentenced to serve six months.

He came to live at his present address in August, 1922. At that time he was accompanied by the woman who he now claims is his wife. If he is married to her at all the marriage must have taken place within the last two years.

The Russells claim not to know much about the Greenwood people except that they originally came from Newark, N. J. and that



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Mrs. Greenwood is a prostitute and is out "hustling" at present. Jim Russell claims that he will secure further information about these people.

Both Greenwood and Blackwell are employed by the International at New Brunswick, N. J. and if necessary, we might be able to get their employment papers and find out what their previous references are.

I asked the Russells about Cecil Battle. They claim that his correct name is Frank Cecil Battle and that he married the daughter of a man named Marono, or some such similar name. That Battle and his wife lived on the Gibson farm for quite some time. It finally developed that both Battle and his father-in-law, Marono, were on intimate terms with Mrs. Gibson. A fight followed and both Battle's wife and Marono's wife left them. Battle removed from the farm following this trouble. Since that time the Marono's have become reconciled, but the Battles are still living apart.

I am endeavoring to locate both the Battles and the Maronos.

The Russells claim that Mrs. Gibson was arrested in New Brunswick on two occasions. From the story as they have it, Bill Whittaker transferred his affections to some New Brunswick girl and Mrs. Gibson in a fit of jealousy, came to New Brunswick and gave the girl a beating.

The Russells also have a long story as to the way they were treated at Somerville, N. J. by Simpson and Underwood. They were detained there over night and grilled and Simpson finally announced that he was going to have Mrs. Russell held without bail when she persisted in sticking to her original story. She was then turned over to Underwood who tried to induce her to fix the conversation with Jane Gibson as occurring on some other date. When she would not do so, he wanted her to change the time of the night that it took place. He promised her that no harm would come to her if she changed her story. She stuck to the time and date and after numerous threats, was permitted to go home in the custody of her husband.

The state trooper who came to take her to Somerville also told her that the best thing for her to do when she got to Somerville would be to know nothing.

Respectfully submitted;

D. T.